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AN OPEN LETTER TO A FRIEND

You were asking why we need another library at Rice, or at least an addition to the Fondren. We don't need a big one, of course, but we do need a Special Materials Library, and I'll tell you what I would call Special Materials.

For one thing, we very much need a place where our rare books and manuscripts can be consulted by scholars. At present we have no such place, merely a stack room, already overcrowded, where our rarest books are housed. Many rare books are in the open stacks for want of a place where they can be better cared for.

What I have in mind is a big pleasant room like the Rare Book Reading Room at the Huntington Library in California. In that room the scholars are assigned to individual desks or to places at long tables, and each can have his reading stand and his noiseless typewriter (because no ink is allowed). A few essential reference books are kept in the room and others are available in the adjacent Reference Room. The rare books and manuscripts themselves are of course kept in a special stack and given out from a charge desk, from which their use can be adequately supervised.

Such a place would not only greatly facilitate the use of rare books and thus promote scholarship, but it would also greatly ease our ever-present and growing problem of lack of sufficient faculty studies.

Second, after the Rare Books I should put the Fine Books. We need a Browsing Room, a place where attractive editions, autographed copies, etc. can be read and enjoyed. We have the nucleus of a collection of beautiful books, but we hesitate to put them on the open shelves for fear of loss or unnecessary damage. Yet I hate to keep books away from readers, and to me there is nothing so dismal as a book which is a museum piece (except for the Gutenberg Bible, or something like that), and I can picture a Browsing Room where students can read books, just for the fun of it, in the most attractive of editions.

The letter which follows in this issue of The Flyleaf will give you one man's idea, and a good idea it is too, of what should be in what he calls a Model Library or Gentleman's Library open to the students of a university.

Third and next, but not third in importance, come the Rice Archives. At present these are confined, and I mean confined, to two little rooms in the basement. Neither of them is adequately lighted, and again there is no place where the materials can be spread out and consulted. Fortunately, in Bill Dix's days, a good start toward building a collection of Rice Archives was made, and this has been added to, and Miss Dean has kept it in the best possible order.

A fourth element, and this is really important, would be a room or rooms where micro-printed materials can be stored and used. Whether you like it or not, microfilm is going to be more and more

necessary in the library of the future. These facilities are also at the point of uncomfortable (and hence inefficient) over-crowding in the Fondren.

So many things, including unobtainable rare books, are now available on microfilm or micro-cards, that it would be most logical to have our micro-materials in this hoped-for Special Materials or Scholars' Library. Since the user of these materials and the reading machines needs instruction and some supervision, all micro-materials might well be kept in the area where other rare materials were being used; this would also save on the supervision.

These, then, are the parts of the new library which I should like to see on this campus: Rare Book & Manuscript Reading Room and Stacks, Browsing Room, Archives Room, and Micro-Materials Room. These need not all necessarily be separate rooms, although I think the Browsing Room should be apart from the others. And to these should be added an Exhibit Area, where we could have attractive displays of all kinds.

I am as sure as I can be that such a library would greatly increase our chances of receiving donations of rare books, historical papers, etc. It would also greatly ease our space problem in several fields.

The question naturally comes up as to where to put this library, supposing we can get it. It has been suggested that it be put in the present library building, perhaps on the fifth floor or in the basement. I feel certain that normal library expansion over the next ten or twenty-five years will use up all the space we have under the Fondren roof, and that the way to make the Fondren last longer, and to provide the best facilities, would be to put up a new building

alongside the parent library. You will remember the Houghton Library at Harvard, not a very large building and devoted to rare books, which is placed beside the great Widener Library at Harvard and is connected to it by a sort of umbilical cord or passageway through which reference books can be fed into the blood-stream of scholarship.

Another idea would be to build an addition on-to the west side of the Fondren, and this would probably cost less. This would permit a needed expansion of our Workroom (Preparations Room) and would permit easy access to the main collection by researchers who were using the Special Materials Library.

Intelligent planning would keep the costs down, but you know as well as I do that buildings don't heat and light and look after themselves, so upkeep should be figured into any expenses that we might be talking about. But a library such as I describe need not be a huge place, and it would make a wonderful memorial to someone. And it would do the new Rice University a lot of good.

Thanks for your interest.

Faithfully,

H.C.

The editors hope that their readers will enjoy the following letter, written (it is true) in 1912 but just as good today, about books and the readers of books. It was written by Edward Bradford Titchener, the great psychologist (a large part of whose library was purchased by Rice), to his friend Louis N. Wilson, then Librarian of Clark University in Worcester. Mr. Wilson had evidently submitted an Ideal Bibliography to Professor Titchener, who used this as a text from which to launch his dicta about what a Gentleman's Library really should be.

The FLYLEAF is greatly indebted to the Fondren's first Librarian, Dr. William S. Dix of Princeton, for having traced and passed on this classic piece of bibliophilia.

February 5, 1912

Dear Wilson:

(1) It is a mistake to think that the form in which a book is presented to the reader makes no difference. One is tempted to books, very largely, by their outsides. For instance, to put the matter at a low level, a rebound book always has the attraction that it must have been read by many people and is therefore probably of interest. There is also at a higher level an attraction about the form of binding which the author himself saw and handled, or which dates from a certain period which (from study or home associations or what not) interests the individual reader.

Now you have got a lot of American reprints, as of Cuthbert Bede (whom, with what I think is mistaken accuracy, you call E. Bradley), and some of these reprints are dear, whereas the rightly printed and bound originals (I don't mean necessarily first editions) can be picked up cheap. Part of the education of your prospective readers and buyers, part of the greatest educational value of your whole library, consists in getting the students to use secondhand catalogues. You say not a word on this subject; and you let the librarian overpower the book-lover and reader by talking of E. Bradley.

You should get yourself the right edition of the book; and then you should annotate as to cheap reprints, American editions, current editions with introductions, and so forth. You should get the old paperbound Verdant Greens, with the woodcuts, and then you should rebound in a calf that looked like rebinding; a soft and familiar calf that looked as if it had been much handled; a calf that smelled of snuff and suggested a candle to read by;

a grandfatherly calf. That means trouble, but to make men book-lovers is worth trouble; and you make men book-lovers, not by librarianship, but by being good to books yourself.

(2) No gentleman's library would ever contain a full publisher's 'set' or 'library'. Your Home University Library should be kicked back to the general library, till its several volumes have been tested by professional readers there; then the thumbed volumes might go on to the 'model' shelves. Your Little Classics should also go; or, at least be placed provisionally under their topical headings till you get better copies. Think of really reading Lamb or More as a Little Classic! All right for reference; all right as portable property; but you want your men to read.

(3) In buying novels, you should buy one or two that characterize a man, or characterize his different periods; the rest should be left out. For Crawford, e.g., you might buy Saracinesca and, say, Khaled: that is all. Then, if the reader bites, he can find the rest in the general or public library; or can begin to buy for himself.

You should by no means have the Dooneland edition of Lorna Doone; and by still less means (if possible) introduce Jane Eyre by Mrs. Humphrey Ward. Ye gods! think of the gulf between Charlotte and Mrs. H! These books should stand alone by their print; and they should be got in some early (not necessarily first again) English edition. And how could one get fond of Lever save in the old dingy-red Chapman and Hall? Get the two most characteristic books: Charles O' Malley and, say, The O'Donoghue and let the rest slide again.

(4) There are other things to do with books--when once you have become a reader--than to read

them. You get fond of books as personalities. So I should put in a Montaigne, in his old French; and a 16th century Aristotle; and a Plantin or two, and an Elzivir, and perhaps a specimen of a chained book in Latin, and a Nuremberg Ship of Fools--a few things of that sort. Suppose the men can't read them? If I had bought, all my life, only the books whose languages I could read, I should never have learned to read the languages they are written in.

(5) A model library must be scrappy; and its scrappiness is precisely a part of its modelity. The interesting parts of a book-lovers collection are just the scrappy parts, which show the range and idiosyncrasy of his personal taste. You can be more catholic than the individual; but you must aim at being scrappy. And you must always and always remember that a model library cannot be model if it is new; it must have almost a battered face; not to match Grand Rapids furniture. The incongruity of a model library--a new masterpiece cheek by jowl with an old treasure--is again one of its greatest charms. Comfort and homeliness and everything mattering but clothes; those are the attributes of a gentleman's library.

Now for some details. Reference books are not books at all; I pass them by. They simply fill the lowest shelves, that are difficult to stoop to. Peace be on their harmless, necessary heads! They should have among them that folio Josephus which nobody ever opens; otherwise I dismiss them.

In education you must, first of all, kick out all the American college stories; they are not books. Put in Newman's Idea of a University; and the Utopias--in proper editions, down to and including H. G. Wells; and books of the type of

Hart's German Universities. Your list is too formal even when weeded of the abiblia.

In philosophy you want Jowett's Republic, and Fiske's Cosmic Philosophy, and Bacon's Essays is a single volume, and Stephan's Science of Ethics (a glorious book in a most forbidding binding; but it calves well), and Sidgwick's little History of Ethics, and Locke's Essay in 'contemporary calf' and Hume in the 3-vol. 8vo. edition, calf gilt, and Pollock's Spinoza and Jevon's Principles of Science, and Whewell's History, and Adam Smith (not new), and a folio Hobbes--Hobbes should be read in folio; don't be afraid of a few! --and perhaps the glorious 4to edition of all Bacon, that can be picked up for a song, and has the portrait, and is never read but is a delight to handle. And so farewell to the philosophers, --for the moment.

For Darwin you want only the Origin, the Descent, and the Orchids; but you want them in Murray's green, as far back as your purse will take you. The 1862 Orchids is in brown, and costs very little; the first Descent costs only a pound, I think. Burn the popular editions at 75 cents. And I am sorry you have all of Huxley; the separate pieces, a few of them, are better. You want Chamber's Natural History of Creation, and you want the Wallace books (the early ones), and Bates' Amazon, and Moseley's Challenger.

You want the Tylor and Lubbock books, and several Galtons, and Geddes and Thompson on Sex, and Dawkins' Early Man in Britain, and Punnett on Mendelism, and a couple of Lang's anthropological books, and Helmholtz' Lectures, and Tyndall on Light and Sound, and a sprinkling of books by men like Ball and Procter; I

haven't time to specify. Get rid of your Home University, stock lock and barrel!

You want one good old Bible, a Breeches or something of that sort. You want the Koran and probably the Book of Mormon. You want some good anthropological books that deal particularly with religion; not too technical. Lady Duff Gordon's Egypt (I don't mind the Meredith introduction to that), might almost come under this head. You want some architectural books too; Swainson and Lethaby's St. Sophia, and Butler's Coptic churches of Egypt. It is astonishing how interested you get in what open up as uninteresting books, and how far from book to book the first reading takes you.

You have no Stanley, no Burton, no Cook's Voyages, nothing of that sort, and you should assuredly have Peary's North Pole. We are sick of Peary; but this book is one of the great books in its line. Johnston's Liberia can be picked up probably as a remainder; it is cumbrous and unwieldy, but it should interest young America. Cut out your Beautiful Englands at 60 cents; they don't belong here. All right as stop-gaps, of course; but you don't want ready-to-order books, as you don't want gift-books.

Let me insist again that you don't want the best-latest, most corrected, knowingly-introduced books; you want the right books; and the right ones are a trifle old-fashioned, left to speak for themselves, good in paper and print but not scientifically annotated or prefaced.

Under Biography you want Tennyson and Morley's Gladstone. And why not Plutarch? And why not a few furriners?

The Literature makes me groan. Begin by burning your Everymans and by kicking out your Little Classics.

Kill Moulton's World Literature; have you ever really tried to read it? Throw your Pater back to the general library; keep only the Marius, the Renaissance, and the Imaginary Portraits. Cut your Holmes; keep one Autocrat and Elsie Venner. I have read all these blamed things; but I should never have read them all if they had been thrown at my head in a lump. Forget you are a librarian, and call Macaulay by his name; who the deuce cares that he was first baron? He was Thomas Babington Macaulay, as I knew him. Put Emerson's Journals permanently in the fire; and put his works back in the general library; the Essays are enough. Put in three good Matthew Arnolds in the brown cloth, rubbed, of the catalogues. 'Pushing to the Front' I know not; I imagine it is good for kindling. Great Heavens--we are talking Literature! Where are Rabelais and Montaigne and Macchiavelli and Balzac? Where are your Historians--Gibbon and Froude (not forgetting the Short Studies) and Hume and all the rest of them?

Where are Fielding and Swift and Sterne and Dumas and Smollett, and Gill Blas and Rasselas and Candide? You should have two Merediths, an early and a late; and the Diana should not be one of them. I can stand the full Dickens, Scott, Thackeray; but you make a mistake, all the same, in not weeding. Let the men get a taste, and their thirst grows; they'll come to you and ask for more; lay it all before them and you take away their appetite. All this fiction wants weeding. And who is S. L. Clemens? The owner of a model library is not and never will be a librarian; you forget that; and the dear old baroness Tautphoeus--whom we never could pronounce--you have metamorphosed into Freifrau. You want Hardy and Wilkie Collins and a Harrison Ainsworth. You want a sprinkling of moderns--Wells and Conrad and Herrick and DeMorgan and Bennett; half a dozen a year, weeding as you go. You want more Henry James

and less George Elliot; and you want a Howells, and a Stockton's Rudder Grange, and a few things like that.

Your poets bother me, partly by your confounded editors, and partly by your refusing to call Lord Byron by his right name. Not a Swinburne in the lot, not even the Atalanta. I am getting violent; but I do not believe that anyone in the wide world would ever become a lover of poetry from your list.

Take a single Globe edition of Alfred Tennyson, and be done with it--drop your first baron and be done with that! It is not your reputation as a cataloguer, but the readers, who are in question. If you annotate, do it after the book, in fine print, in the way I suggested earlier. There are omissions, of course; you want a Stephen Phillips and a couple of Watsons and other things; but what bothers me now is the repellent look of the catalogue. A poet should be catalogued very very simply, --just with Works after him, or the special title, as of Watson's For England. You should have Mackail's Virgil, and you should list separately (blow the duplications!) the translations of the big things that fall within a man's Works.

You have left out all the spice of the last century; the Alice books, and Calverly, and Bon Gaultier. No--I see you have the Ingoldsbys and I suppose the Babs are in Gilbert's Songs. I apologize so far; but there is a lot to be gathered.

Is there really no Shakespeare, or have you listed him under the seventh early of Cork? I should advise the Leopold edition in 4to, and the reprints (in separate plays) of the first folio now being got out by Crowell.

Hadji Baba goes in! And the Arabian Nights!
in Lane's edition. And Max Muller's Chips! And
Browne's Urn Burial and Pseudodoxia! And Bryce's
American Commonwealth! Half a dozen books on
Music! The difficulty is to stop. Kinglake's
Eothen! Butler's Erewhon!

Edward Bradford Titchener

WHAT ARE WE READING?

The American Publisher's Weekly recently published these lists of best-sellers:

Fiction

Morris West, The Devil's Advocate

Marcia Davenport, The Constant Image

Thomas Costain, The Darkness and the Dawn.

Non-Fiction

Herman Wouk, This Is My God

Alexander King, May This House Be Safe
From Tigers

Leonard Bernstein, The Joy of Music

These were all bushmen and used to spending their nights alone, and every man carried a book in his saddlebags. . . . An ordinary book would not do. Any book worth carrying had to last a year or more. . . . So each one carried a book he couldn't understand that would last him awhile, and this was the book he talked by.

Olaf Ruhen
"Revenge in the Desert," Saturday Evening Post

DESIDERATA

Winstanley, William, 1628-1690. The lives of the most famous English poets. 1st ed. 1687. \$30.00

Smollett, Tobias George, 1721-1771. The adventures of Ferdinand, Count Fathom. 2v. 1st ed. London, 1753. \$35.00

George, Mary Dorothy. English political caricature. 2v. New York, 1959. \$23.00

Nicoll, Allardyce, 1894- . A history of English drama, 1660-1900. 6v. \$60.00

PERIODICALS NEEDED

Catholic World, January, 1959.

American Bar Association Journal, January-December, 1953; January-June, 1954; August, December, 1956; January-December, 1959.

Business Week, February 7, 21, and 28, 1959.

Science News Letter, 1959.

The curiosity of the reading public knows no bounds. Foyles bookstore in London recently received requests for books on How to Grow Asparagus; Slimming; Japanese Flower Arrangements; Charms and Talismans; Conjuring Tricks; Musical Boxes; Marshal Tito; How to Make a Barometer; Mumps; and Gas Mantles.

E. B. L. S. GIFT

Some time ago the Alumnae of the Elizabeth Baldwin Literary Society presented the Fondren with the money to buy a slide projector of the most expensive sort. Not all of this generous gift, and another which followed it, was used at that time. During the past year two other projectors, for different sizes of slides and film strips, have been purchased from the E. B. L. S. Alumnae fund, and they are herewith most gratefully acknowledged.

As one grows older one may become less dogmatic and problematical but there is no assurance that one becomes wiser.

--T. S. Eliot.

If you read greedily enough, and indiscriminately enough, you will sooner or later become acquainted with some of these major writings that all your youthful experience persuaded you to avoid.

--Eric Linklater.

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